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WALTER SCOTT'S VISION OF *DON RODERICK* (1811): A «DRUM AND TRUMPET PERFORMANCE»?

Susan VALLADARES
(University of Oxford)

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ABSTRACT: Scott's poem *The Vision of Don Roderick* was published in 1811, to raise funds for the «Portuguese Sufferers» and rally support for Britain's involvement in the Peninsular War—a campaign that was coming under mounting public criticism. Scott's own description of his poem as a «Drum and Trumpet performance» has generally been read as an indicator of his dissatisfaction with *The Vision*—defined by contemporary reviewers as a circumstantial piece, quite different to his earlier poems. This article argues that Scott was, however, far from dismissive of *The Vision*. He distributed handsome copies to his close circle of friends and literary acquaintances, and even added a few miscellaneous poems to it, in order to secure new editions in the future. The historical span of the poem, stretching from the eighth-century to present day Spain, was certainly problematic but, as this article attests, also inextricably related to Scott's political agenda. The first part of the article considers the contentiousness of religious and historical themes then associated with Spain through a reading of Robert Southey's *Don Roderick; Last of the Goths* (1814), a poem comparable to Scott's in its subject, but markedly different in its scope and execution. The article then moves on to consider the national tensions (and specifically Scottish) concerns underlying *The Vision*'s narrative. It offers a discussion of Scott's representation of the Highlanders, his interest in the essential plurality of the Iberian Peninsula, dismissal of Sir John Moore, and opposition to the Catholic movement in Britain.

KEYWORDS: Walter Scott, *The Vision of Don Roderick*, Peninsular War, contemporary reviews, Robert Southey, *Don Roderick; Last of the Goths*, religion, history, nationalism, Highlanders, Sir John Moore.

LA VISIÓN DE DON RODRIGO (1811) DE WALTER SCOTT: ¿UNA «FAENA DE TAMBOR Y TROMPETA»?

RESUMEN: La *Visión de Don Rodrigo*, poema de Sir Walter Scott, fue publicado en 1811, con el fin de recaudar fondos para las «víctimas portuguesas» y entusiasmar al público inglés para que apoyase la participación británica en la Guerra de la Independencia—una cam-

paña que había sido objeto de crecientes críticas. La descripción de Scott de su poema como una «faena de tambor y trompeta» ha sido leída generalmente como un indicador de su insatisfacción con la *Visión*, definida por los críticos contemporáneos como una pieza circunstancial, muy diferente a sus primeros poemas. Este artículo argumenta que Scott no fue, sin embargo, nada desdeñoso con la *Visión*: distribuyó hermosas copias a su círculo cercano de amigos y conocidos literarios, e incluso le añadió algunos otros poemas más cortos a fin de garantizar nuevas ediciones en el futuro. El lapso histórico de la poesía, que se extiende desde el siglo VIII hasta la actualidad española, fue sin duda problemático, pero, como demuestra este artículo, también estaba indisolublemente asociado a la agenda política de Scott. La primera parte del artículo considera la conflictividad de los temas religiosos e históricos relacionados con España mediante una lectura de *Don Roderick, último de los Godos* (1814), poema de Robert Southey comparable al de Scott por su tema, pero muy diferente en su ámbito de aplicación y ejecución. El artículo pasa luego a considerar las tensiones nacionales (y específicamente escocesas) que subyacen a la narración de la *Visión* de Scott, y ofrece un análisis de la representación de Scott de los «Highlanders», su interés por la pluralidad esencial de la Península Ibérica, la exclusión de Sir John Moore de su poema y la oposición al movimiento católico en Gran Bretaña.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Walter Scott, *La Visión de Don Rodrigo*, Guerra de la Independencia, críticas contemporáneas, Robert Southey, *Don Roderick, último de los Godos*, religión, historia, nacionalismo, «Highlanders», Sir John Moore.

The cementing of an Anglo-Spanish alliance in the summer of 1808 was welcome news for a British public still recovering from the implications of the Treaty of Tilsit.¹ But this turning point in diplomatic relations was, as the then Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, George Canning, recognised, far from straightforward. In his Address to the House of Commons, Canning took pains to explain, in no ambiguous terms, that «any nation of Europe that starts up with a determination to oppose a Power which [...] is the common enemy of all nations, becomes instantly our essential Ally» (Hansard, 1812: xi, 886). While the official parliamentary consensus was clear —past judgements against the Spaniards should be overlooked in favour of uniting against an ever more militant France— the means for doing so were much less intuitive. Spain had, after all, long been demonised as the national bugbear; a country stereotyped through grotesque narratives of colonial rapine, sexual perversion and religious intolerance known as the «Black Legend».² Comparable prejudices and suspicions were held by the Spaniards and so engrained in the national consciousness of both populaces, that not even the heady excitement occasioned by a new political dawn could hope to realise more than a momentary check on such age-old hostilities. As a result, in spite of all the government's best efforts, it was not long before the British press began publishing inflammatory articles that blamed the Spaniards for poor co-operation, soldierly ineptitude, and a damning misrepresentation of localised support. Canning had been right to anticipate that the Anglo-Spanish alliance would require a determined effort at cultural diplomacy:

¹ The Treaty of Tilsit was signed in July 1807. As Gregory Fremont Barnes explains, it saw Russia form an alliance with France against Britain that made Napoleon supreme in Europe, leaving only Britain, Sweden and Portugal to oppose him (2002: 35).

² See Bartolomé de las Casas's *Brevísima relación de la destrucción de las Indias* [Brief account of the destruction of the Indies] (1552, trans. into English in 1565) which, as Rebecca Cole Heinowitz explains, was «the foundational text for British Black Legend rhetoric» (2010: 31).

within less than a year, support for the Peninsular War was no longer unanimous, but partisan and fractured.

This was, then, a time of shifting political opinions about the war; but not so much for Walter Scott, who remained an ardent defender of Britain's involvement in Iberia. From 1808 to 1814, Scott frequently wrote to his correspondents on Spanish affairs and even toyed with the idea of enlisting in the Spanish forces (as Walter Savage Landor had done).³ In 1811, moreover, he published *The Vision of Don Roderick*, a poem about Spanish history and Britain's role in the recent military campaign. This article departs from the premise that in order to better understand that poem's design, we need to read it against the backdrop of exalted hopes and disappointments that characterised the British public's response to the Peninsular War, and Scott's own political agenda at the time of the poem's composition.

One of my main aims in this article is to reclaim *The Vision of Don Roderick* from the critical shadows cast by Scott's more successful poems, such as *Marmion* (1808) or *The Lady of the Lake* (1810). This relegation of *The Vision* was established by its first reviewers, who had been quick to recognise that Scott's «Spanish poem» was significantly different from his earlier productions. In writing *The Vision*, Scott had not only abandoned «the vantage ground of Scottish Scenery» but chosen a contentious topical theme.⁴ Locating Scott's talent in «descriptive poetry», the *Monthly Review* repeatedly insisted that Scott should now select a «nobler impulse to his genius!».⁵ The *Poetical Register* agreed, offering its final judgement of *The Vision* as «inferior in merit» to Scott's other celebrated compositions.⁶ Francis Jeffrey, who reviewed the poem for the *Edinburgh Review*, was unsurprisingly antagonistic to Scott's design, and went so far as to complain that, independent of its geographical setting, the poem rested on a subject of only «temporary interest» unlikely to excite the attention of posterity. The topicality of Scott's poem was, from the outset, considered problematic; this article pinpoints why, and asks what these moments of interpretative tension reveal about Scott's larger investment in Anglo-Spanish politics.

While interest in Scott's poem has grown in recent years,⁷ *The Vision of Don Roderick* continues to be regarded as a poem by which Scott placed little value. This was an impression fostered, in no small part, by the poet himself, who referred to it in his letters as a «patriotic puppet», «a Rhodomontade piece of goods», a «Drum and Trumpet performance».⁸ These epithets carry negative associations, but I contend that, in this case, we need to revise the tendency to equate them with a basic dismissal of the poem itself.⁹ In this article, I explore how *The Vision of Roderick*, a poem glaringly promoted as an attempt to raise money for the «Portuguese Sufferers» and thus re-generate momentum

³ On Landor's enlistment see, for instance, Southey's letter to C. W. W. Wynn (dated Keswick, 1808, in Southey, 1856: 11, 94).

⁴ In his «Introduction» to the *Vision* Scott explicitly dramatizes the muses' call for him to locate the poem's action in Spain: «Explore those regions, where the flinty crest | Of wild Nevada ever gleams with snows, | Where in the proud Alhambra's ruined breast | Barbaric monuments of pomp repose». See *The Vision of Don Roderick* (Scott, 1811: verse x, 9). All subsequent references to the poem will relate to this version.

⁵ See «Article XI», *Monthly Review*, July 1811, p. 307.

⁶ See «Miscellaneous Poetry», *Poetical Register*, January 1814, p. 604.

⁷ Scholarship on the literary and political discourses of the Napoleonic Wars have, in the last ten years, ushered a renewed interest in Scott's poem. See, for instance, Diego Saglia's «The Nation as Progress Text in Scott's *The Vision of Don Roderick*» (in Saglia, 2000: 106–115); Philip Shaw's «Walter Scott: The Discipline of History» (in Shaw, 2002: 35–66); and J. R. Watson's «Poetry and the Army: The War 1807–08» (in Watson, 2003: 108–15).

⁸ See Scott's letters to John B. Morritt, Patrick Murray, and William Hayley (in Scott, 1932–1937: 11, 507, 509, and 513 respectively).

⁹ The editors of the Walter Scott Digital Archive provide a good example of this when they cite the epithets in Scott's letters as evidence that the poet «dismissed» his poem upon its completion. <<http://www.walterscott.lib.ed.ac.uk/works/poetry/donroderick.html>> [Accessed 01.05.2012]

for the Spanish cause, became the means by which Scott sought to realise his own, very deliberate intervention in the Peninsular War debate. Notwithstanding his disclaimers, the poet placed sufficient stock in his new poem to have it privately printed and distributed among friends and acquaintances (including the Scottish philosopher Adam Ferguson) before Ballantyne issued the first edition in 1811. By March 1814, moreover, Scott was already considering which smaller poems he might select to make «a volume one day or other with *Don Roderick*», and thus safeguard its future editions (1932-37: III, 423). Contrary to expectation, Scott appears to have assigned the poem's greatest value to its malleability for political application; or, in other words, its essential «patriotic puppet[ry]». This article opens by offering a detailed overview of Robert Southey's *Don Roderick; Last of the Goths* (1814) —a poem sharing immediate political and thematic echoes with Scott's, but whose complex treatment of Spanish history and religion can help throw *The Vision*'s design into relief. With this comparison in mind, I turn to consider the national tensions (and specifically Scottish) concerns underlying *The Vision*'s narrative. The sections that follow identify Scott's representation of the Highlanders, his interest in the essential plurality of the Iberian Peninsula, dismissal of Sir John Moore, and opposition to the Catholic movement in Britain as the key political issues dramatized in his poem, and crucial, therefore, to our appreciation of its place in Scott's larger oeuvre.

I

Interestingly, both Walter Savage Landor and Robert Southey also found themselves independently drawn to the Spanish king's story. Southey began to sketch his plans for a poem called «Pelayo» from as early as 1808. As the renowned Hispanist of his age, he responded that year to the public's growing interest in Spain by publishing his translation of *The Chronicles of the Cid* (which was reviewed in the *Quarterly* by Scott),¹⁰ and issuing a third edition of his already successful *Letters Written During a Short Residence in Spain and Portugal*. His plans for «Pelayo» as a poem on Spain that would unfold on an epic scale would take, however, six years to realise. When the work finally appeared in 1814, it was re-titled *Roderick; Last of the Goths*, and warmly praised by Scott, who regarded it a «noble poem»,¹¹ and assured his fellow poet that *Roderick*'s high mix of poetry, patriotism, and private virtue would «hand you down to posterity one of the highest British poets, had you never written another line».¹² Landor, meanwhile, had struggled to find a publisher for his Spanish tragedy, *Count Julian* (1812), completed in January 1811 but deemed «obscure» and, despite Southey's initial encouragement, ultimately «too Greek for representation».¹³ While the 1810s thus saw three poets working on what was essentially the same theme, their treatment of it was significantly different. Diego Saglia suggests that political ideology is likely to have been a determinant factor; «the disaffected republicanism of Landor» running against the grain of «Southey's increasingly conservative principles and Scott's well-established Tory convictions» (2000: 81).

Southey and Scott's growing political proximity in the 1810s, makes a reading of the historical, religious and political inflections of Southey's long and carefully-revised

¹⁰ See *Quarterly Review*, February 1809.

¹¹ Walter Scott to Robert Southey (1932-37: III, 529).

¹² Walter Scott to Robert Southey (1932-37: III, 529). Southey, on the other hand, had been much less impressed by the efforts of his fellow poet. Henry Crabb Robinson transcribed in his diary that Southey responded to *The Vision of Don Roderick* as «an unsubstantial and insignificant performance» (Robinson, 1967: 6-7).

¹³ As quoted by Saglia (2000: 80, n. 27).

Roderick a useful indicator of the challenges registered (but arguably less successfully resolved) in Scott's much more circumstantial poem on the same theme. Unlike Scott, who seems to have been reasonably content to privilege the claims of poetry over history, Southey was unwilling to forego historical detailing. The main narrative of *Roderick* is supplemented by long, meticulously researched footnotes (in English, Spanish, and Latin), which characterise Southey's poem with an air of scholasticism that both aligns his verse to the historical record and, by strong implication, distinguishes his version of the Roderick story from the earlier, more purely romantic, accounts by Landor and Scott.¹⁴

As Patricia Grierson lucidly explains, the story of Spain's last Visigoth King dates back to the historiography of the fifteenth century as one of the founding myths of the Spanish nation.¹⁵ Scott elaborates upon this in the opening Note to his poem:

Almost all the Spanish historians, as well as the voice of tradition, ascribe the invasion of the Moors to the forcible violation committed by Roderick upon Florinda, called by the Moors Caba, or Cava. She was the daughter of Count Julian, one of the Gothic monarch's principal lieutenants, who when the crime was perpetrated, was engaged in the defence of Ceuta against the Moors. In his indignation at the ingratitude of his sovereign, and the dishonour of his daughter, Count Julian forgot the duties of a Christian and a patriot, and forming an alliance with Musa, then the caliph's lieutenant in Africa, he countenanced the invasion of Spain by a body of Saracens and Africans, commanded by the celebrated Tarik; the issue of which was the defeat and death of Roderick, and the occupation of almost the whole peninsula by the Moors.¹⁶

The same Note goes on to explain that while Voltaire and Gibbon both express doubts regarding this popular narrative, «the universal tradition is quite sufficient for the purposes of poetry». As such, Scott acknowledges the reservations expressed by Enlightenment historiography, but deliberately chooses to minimise these, placing his emphasis, instead, on an «universal tradition» that offers self-sufficient justification for his poetic theme. Here, we see Scott quite literally locating his poem's political import in the literary (rather than the more strictly historical) imagination. What then, were the advantages open to Southey who, in *Roderick*, treats Spain's historical narrative with much more circumspection? I would like to suggest that the answer lies in Southey's contention that in Spanish history, readers could witness «Piety and war | In strange but fitting union».¹⁷

Southey's narrative begins during the Moorish invasion, with the guilt-tormented King Roderick deserting the battlefield and arriving at an abandoned monastery. In despair, Roderick prostrates himself before the cross:

[...] In attitude, but not in act
Of prayer he lay; an agony of tears
Was all his soul could offer.¹⁸

¹⁴ Robert Southey, *Roderick, The Last of the Goths: A Tragic Poem* (in Southey, 1884: 628-726). All further references will be based on this edition.

¹⁵ Patricia Grieve's recent study, *The Eve of Spain*, offers a fascinating survey and astute analysis of «how Spain created itself through fiction and narrative history» (Grieve, 2009: 12).

¹⁶ Scott, Notes on the Vision: Note 1, 73-74.

¹⁷ Southey, Book XVIII, «The Acclamation», 694.

¹⁸ Southey, Book 1, «Roderick and Romano», 640.

Religion is crucial to the poem's design. Haunted by his crime against Florinda and ashamed of deserting his troops (and thus Spain), Roderick's first attempts at prayer prove frustratingly futile. It is only after a year spent with Romano (a patriotic, aged monk whom he befriends at the monastery), that Roderick is finally able to find solace in religion. This occurs after Romano's death, when Roderick prays for consolation and is granted a dream vision of his mother, Rusilla. She appears «radiant in arms» with «a bloody Cross» on her breastplate, brandishing a sword. It is in response to her battle cry for «Spain and Victory!» that Roderick enthusiastically rushes to the fight. Although he awakens to find it a dream, the Goth's religious arousal marks a pivotal point in the poem's narrative.¹⁹ By prompting him to find his mother and repent of his sins, religion infuses the dejected Roderick with the energy and determination needed for his nation's recovery.

For the remainder of Southey's long poem, Roderick continues to be associated with the virtues of a religious reclamation based on mercy and forgiveness. Notably, in Book III, when Roderick declines to tell Adosinda his name, she re-christens him Maccabee, symbolically likening him to the Jewish rebel leader who helped liberate Israel from the Seleucid Empire.²⁰ Roderick accepts this as his new name and it is not until the final battle between the Christians and Moors (Book xxv) that he reveals his true identity. Mistaken for a Holy Father, he hears Florinda's confession of love (essential insofar as it absolves him of rape), and even ministers the holy sacrament to Julian, who makes a final reversion to Christianity shortly prior to his death.²¹ It is worth remembering, here, that in his first attempt to convince Julian of his misguided religious conversion to Islam, Roderick resorted to recounting the miseries and sufferings that the «creed of Mecca» had brought to Spain. Julian's decision to finally renounce «the Imposter's faith» becomes symbolic, therefore, of yet another turning point in the poem wherein the struggle for Spain's liberation is characterised as a religious crusade.

Throughout, the Spaniards in Southey's poem are given religious endorsement: «a bloody Cross» appearing in Roderick's first dream vision; while later still, when Pelayo agrees to lead the Spanish armies, he is shown before the holy altar, «stretching forth | His hands toward the crucifix».²² Southey even imagines the official acclamation of Pelayo's kingship —one of the great climaxes of the poem— as a consecration. These religious signifiers may seem curious, in light of Southey's outspoken anti-Catholicism, but when viewed historically, they can, in fact, be reconciled with his political agenda.²³

In Book XVIII (on Pelayo's kingship), Southey places deliberate emphasis on Spain's divinely ordained history:

[...] All-able Providence
Thus having ordered all, that Spain this hour
With happiest omens, and on surest base,
Should from its ruins rear again her throne.²⁴

¹⁹ Southey, Book II, «Roderick in Solitude», 644.

²⁰ On allusions to «Israel», see also Scott's *Vision* verse xxxvi, 37; and Notes to the Conclusion: Note 1, 107-110.

²¹ Southey, Book xxiv, «Roderick and Count Julian», 711.

²² Southey, Book vii, «Roderick and Pelayo», 660.

²³ For Southey's critique of Islam see Book xx, «The Moorish Camp», 699-701, and Book xxii, «The Moorish Council», 707.

²⁴ Southey, Book xviii, «The Acclamation», 694.

It is worth noting that in Roderick's dream vision of a liberated Spain the Goths are similarly portrayed as «the poor mere instrument of things ordain'd».²⁵ This choice of a teleological narrative was closely related to the poem's topicality when it was published in 1814. Thus, in the ruins of Auria (which the *Quarterly Review* immediately recognised as an allusion to Zaragoza), the narrator's apostrophe to the land anticipates «undiscoverable futurity» where «yet unevolved, your destined glories lay».²⁶ Later, when describing the journey to Count Pedro's Castle, the narrator reflects upon the desert-like landscape, «where in years to come | Shall populous towns arise, and crested towers | And stately temples rear their heads on high».²⁷ Comparable prolepsis occurs at various other stages in the poem as, for example, in Book xvi, where the narrator foresees that Pelayo's remains would one day be buried in the cave that his young daughter Hermesind now admires as their home. The subsequent implication that it would be in Hermesind's destiny to marry Alphonso symbolically ties Pelayo's achievements to Spain's future stability and unity.²⁸

These glimpses of futurity help corroborate the heroic outcome of the poem. I would like to claim that in so doing, they offer valuable insight into Southey's evolving political views. In a letter to Landor dated 1809, the poet refers to the *Reconquista* as proof of Spain's national spirit and the Spaniards' unwavering resistance to Napoleonic rule: «A nation that has carried on a war of seven centuries against one invader will never rest till it has thrown off their yoke also», he reasons. To develop this argument, Southey draws upon a series of Biblical allusions:

Doubtless, they have much to endure; no nation owes so heavy a debt to Divine vengeance. There is retribution to be exacted for the Jews, for the American Indians, for the Dutch. It is in the righteous and natural order of things that the sins of the fathers should be visited upon the children. Their punishment is the fruit of their crimes: by the enormities which they perpetrated under Fernando el Catolico and Felipe II., they established a thorough tyranny over body and soul in their own country, and this depravation has been the consequence. They are now passing through their purgatory, but it will purify them, and the Spaniards will come out like gold from the furnace.²⁹

Relying upon logic similar to that of his poem, the letter works to bring together Spain's secular and religious narratives by depicting the final outcome of the nation's struggle as if it were the last stages of a penitent's redemption. The letter is key to understanding the strategies at play in Southey's poem wherein Adosinda and Roderick are presented as the Jewish liberators Judith and Maccabee.³⁰ These characters were crucial to Southey's poetic design; their actions, which update the historic narrative, causing them to feature prominently in contemporary reviews of the poem. In his letter to Landor, it is interesting, therefore, that Southey should draw deliberate attention to the expulsion of the Spanish Jews in 1492 and the horrific crimes committed at home and abroad by Philip II in the name of religion. This suggests that the Jewish association given to his poem's two, arguably, most interesting characters, and frequent allusions to

²⁵ Southey, Book xviii, «The Acclamation», 696.

²⁶ See «Article xiii», *Quarterly Review*, April-July 1815, p. 91. Southey, Book iii, «Adosinda», 646.

²⁷ Southey, Book xi, «Count Pedro's Castle», 672.

²⁸ Southey, Book xvi, «Covadonga», 686. N. B. As King of Spain, Alphonso established Castillian as the national language.

²⁹ Robert Southey to Walter Savage Landor (Keswick, 1809; in Southey, 1856: II, 165).

³⁰ Southey, Book iv, «The Monastery of St. Felix», 649. See also letter to Capt. Southey (11 October 1811; in Southey, 1856: II, 235).

providential design throughout, were intended to link the Napoleonic invasion to Spain's incriminating historical record.

Adosinda and Roderick, who set in motion the heroic action of the poem, represent national progress founded on a religious re-configuration of the past. But by placing repeated emphasis on a Providential narrative (associated with Protestantism and thus Britain) Southey significantly qualified the link informing his poem's dramatization of Catholicism with Spanish nationhood. While Spanish history forms a critical aspect of *Roderick's* design, it is ultimately eclipsed by an interest in futurity that posits British Protestantism as Spain's ultimate salvation. This unusual alignment of the Protestant and Catholic faiths helped Southey's readers make sense of, and ascribe order to, tragic events that in 1814 were finally moving toward a horizon of resolution. In 1811 Walter Scott had reached a similar conclusion but, as the next section of this article reveals, in contrast to Southey, Scott allowed the religious and historical imbrications of Roderick's story to remain relatively untouched.

II

The ease with which contemporary readers would have been able to update Roderick's story was one of Southey's key concerns —and Scott's likewise. As such, when Scott declares in the Preface to his poem that he has «presumed to prolong the Vision of the Revolutions of Spain down to the present eventful crisis of the Peninsula», the word «presumed» resonates powerfully; underlining the poet's attempt to establish a direct line from eighth-century to modern day Spain as an audacious undertaking.³¹

Scott's *The Vision of Don Roderick*, supplemented by Notes and sandwiched by a distinct Introduction and Conclusion, is divided into three parts. The first portrays the descent of Roderick into an enchanted edifice where, violating the customary injunction that forbade the king's entrance, Roderick learns of the Moorish invasion (which would result in the fall of Spain and his own death), the gradual restoration of Christian rule, Spain's imperial supremacy in the New World, the Inquisition, and the decline of Spain after its Golden Years. The narrative then catches up with the present day, dramatizing Napoleon's invasion, the Spaniards' resistance efforts, and the arrival of British military aid.

Francis Jeffrey responded with outright hostility to this poetic plan. Admonishing the poet for having «venture[d] upon a theme with which all the vulgar echoes of the country are at that moment resounding», Jeffrey argued that Roderick, only «nominally» the subject of Scott's poem, provided «obviously a mere prelude to the grand piece of our recent battles».³² He dismissed Scott's historical frame as nothing better than «a sort of machinery designed to give dignity and effect» to the introduction of the Peninsular campaign:

In point of fact, the poem begins and ends with Lord Wellington; and being written for the benefit of the plundered Portuguese, and upon a Spanish story, the thing could not well have been otherwise. The public, at this moment, will listen to nothing about Spain, but the history of the present war; and the Old Gothic King, and the Moors, are considered, we dare say, by Mr. Scott's most impatient readers, as very tedious interlopers in the proper business of the piece.³³

³¹ Scott, Preface, vii.

³² «Article vi», *ER*, August 1811, p. 379. See also Walter Scott to J Morritt (dated September 1811, in Scott, 1932-37: II, 543).

³³ «Article vi», *ER*, August 1811, p. 380. N.B. It is interesting that Scott chose a Spanish theme for a poem whose

Here, interestingly, Jeffrey is as critical of the public's indiscriminate bias for Spanish news, as he is of Scott succumbing to the decidedly «unpoetical» subject of contemporary warfare.³⁴ In his opinion, the poet could neither «tell his readers any thing they did not know before», «add any ennobling circumstance to the certain and notorious truth, nor suppress any vulgar or degrading ones with which it may happen to be encumbered».³⁵ Relishing the irony that a poem written for the «Portuguese Sufferers» was, in fact, based «upon a Spanish story», Jeffrey had no qualms in rejecting *The Vision* as inadequate to the Horatian purposes of poetry.

Jeffrey was, of course, still smarting from the «Don Cevallos» furore of 1808, as a result of which *The Edinburgh Review* lost a good number of its more conservative readers and a rival magazine, *The Quarterly Review*, was established under Scott's direction.³⁶ His criticism was, nevertheless, a valid one, and recorded, to varying degrees, by most contemporary reviewers. While granting that the final visions were likely to be very interesting to the modern reader of Scott's poem, *The Critical Review* sniggeringly suggested, nonetheless, that they «must have been desperately dull and fatiguing to poor King Roderick», who was unlikely to have had much interest in what would happen 1100 years after his own death.³⁷ Roderick may have been the poem's eponymous character, but Scott's real interest, by contrast to Southey, was in the meanings ascribed to Roderick's visions, not his agency —and much less his psychology, which is essentially flattened as a result. Indeed, not even *The Quarterly Review* could entirely discount the validity of Jeffrey's reservations: in writing a poem connected with «modern politics», Scott had risked the danger of «represent[ing] a scene too near our immediate inspection to admit the interposition of the magic glass of fiction and poetry».³⁸

There was, nevertheless, an important distinction to be made between larger political sympathies and localised party feeling. Jeffrey complained that «the present war» —«gabble of all the *quidnuncs* in this country»— was at once too transparent, and too popular a subject for the poetic muse,³⁹ but although the *Quarterly* conceded that «modern politics» were indeed ill-suited to poetry, it promoted Scott's poem, for its excellence of description, pathos and sublimity, as a laudable production; «worthy of his former name, and the glorious theme it celebrates —a theme exalted above all the petty interests of temporary politics».⁴⁰ Ironically, of course, the *Quarterly* itself was not «above all the petty interests of temporary politics»; Scott being the magazine's founding father, and here, as in 1809 (when it was first established) the review in the *Quarterly* being clearly written as a deliberate rejoinder to that of the *Edinburgh*, published two months earlier in August 1811. The critical reception of Scott's poem suggests that *The Vision* had become an ideological battle ground in its own right.

With reviewers of *The Vision*, keen to fulfil a political, as much as literary, agenda, the *Quarterly* set itself the task of countering the attacks levelled by the *Critical* and

sales were intended to provide relief for the Portuguese. In 1811 it was, nevertheless, commonplace to assume that the fate of Spain would decide the outcome of the entire war.

34 By the same token, in 1812 William Ticken was criticised for the «timing» of his Peninsular War fiction, *Santos de Montenos*: «Years should have passed before so sacred a sorrow should have been given up to the tribe of novelists and dramatists. In the case before us, the fiction disgraces the facts, and the facts destroy the illusion of the fiction». See *Critical Review*, 1812: 4th series, 1, 643.

35 «Article VI», *ER*, XVIII, pp. 379-80.

36 For a short summary of the circumstances that resulted in the founding of the *Quarterly*, please see the Coda to this article.

37 See «Article XIII», *Critical Review; or, Annals of Literature*, August 1811, p. 339.

38 See «Article XIII», *Quarterly Review (QR)*, October 1811, p. 229.

39 «Article VI», *ER*, XIII, pp. 379-80.

40 «Article XIII», *QR*, October 1811, p. 235.

Edinburgh against the poem's narratorial framework. The *Quarterly* achieved this by accepting that Roderick's character was indeed likely to have felt «uninterested in and unconnected with the great majority of the events represented»; but only to suggest, by a clever turn of thought, that the poem would have been rendered more consistent had Scott imagined visions extending beyond the present day. The reviewer from the *Quarterly* thus proposes a historical scope even more ambitious than Scott's, anticipating the success he might have enjoyed:

[...] if he had from the present scenes of blood and wickedness anticipated the commencement of an age happy and prosperous, and represented, after the darkness of twelve hundred years, the dawning of liberty and tolerance and national renown, procured to Spain by the patriotism of her children, and the fostering valour of her ally.⁴¹

This solution was nothing if not politically expedient. By conjuring an image of futurity wherein readers are invited to anticipate the successful defeat of Bonaparte, the *Quarterly* not only rejects censures of the Peninsular War as an unwinnable campaign but offers a generous celebration of the Anglo-Spanish alliance —here seen to provide Spain with that ideal balance of masculine and feminine virtues implied by the Burkean synthesis of «fostering valour».

From the outset, Scott seems to have been particularly nervous about *The Vision's* historical framework and topical relevance. His communication of these anxieties takes up a significant part of his Preface, wherein he describes «hastily executing a work, written for a temporary purpose, and on passing events».⁴² The *Universal Magazine* responded to this impatiently, arguing that «no vanity can more justly incur contempt and indignation than that which boasts of negligence and hurry».⁴³ Scott's emphasis on the transient nature of his poem deserves, nevertheless, careful attention. Despite its problematic implications, Scott included it in all editions of *The Vision*. This otherwise precarious Preface survived, I suggest, because it drew attention to a difficult time of composition, marked by the emotional distress surrounding the deaths of Scott's attorney friends, Lord President Blair and Lord Viscount Melville. This makes the poet's description of his poem's fraught, final phase of composition important insofar that it amounts to an implicit recognition that *The Vision's* topical theme might, in essence, prove as fragile as human life itself. Although Scott's poem functions as an attempt to give permanence to this essentially vulnerable theme, the temporal signifiers of «haste» and «passing events» underline the poet's insecurities in addressing these demands. Accepting that his poem was not exempt from an «appearance of negligence and incoherence», Scott seemed to recognise that the Peninsular War, at once his point of departure and arrival, was somewhat resistant to literary expression.⁴⁴

The reference to his recent bereavement would also have prepared Scott's readers for one of *The Vision's* most prominent aims; to give acknowledgement and due celebration to the Highland recruits enlisted in the British army fighting in Spain. In his letter of consolation to Henry Dundas, Lord Melville's son, Scott lamented that Melville's death had robbed the country «of a patriot whose like she will probably not see for a century to come» (1932-37: II, 502). In a letter to Lady Abercorn (dated 5 July 1811), Scott likewise

41 «Article XIII», *QR*, October 1811, p. 228.

42 Scott, «Preface», VII.

43 «Criticism», *Universal Magazine*, August 1811, p. 127.

44 Scott, «Preface», IX.

declared that Lord Melville had been «a generous-spirited patriot, a man of the most extensive political information and one of the kindest friends in private life that ever adorned society» (1932-37: II, 516). The deaths of his friends, which Scott poignantly described as having «broken two strings of my heart», made composition of his poem difficult, and at one point even impossible. But the fact that he considered both his deceased friends to have been valuable as national characters attaches their lives to a larger, symbolic narrative of nationhood. In the summer of 1811, the deaths of Lord Viscount Melville and Lord President Blair could only have made Scott all the more committed to enhancing the patriotic (Scottish) contours of his Spanish poem.

III

The Act of Union of 1800, uniting Ireland to Great Britain, had resulted in an ever more pronounced interest in what constituted British nationhood. In the early nineteenth century, Scott (like writers before and after him) would find it fruitful to look to the Iberian Peninsula as a space in which to displace their own emergent nationalist discourses. At the time, Spain was still quite literally a pluralistic nation, made up of loose states with diverse cultural, political and economic structures. British accounts of the war in Spain seemed to give daily proof that the Spaniard's loyalty remained first and foremost to his province. This localised attachment to one's birthplace was often celebrated; it was just as quickly recognized, nonetheless, that in order for the patriotic effort to succeed, unison of spirit would be needed at all levels.

John Glanville's poem «Iberia» (1812) offers a good example of the domino-like effect started by the «dos de mayo» uprising in Madrid:

SEVILLE uprising and breaks her galling chain,
Rous'd by the shouts of Salamanca's plain;
Prolong the patriot strain and let it dart,
Its forceful energies to every heart (Glanville, 1812: 9).

In «Iberia», the wrongs suffered by Salamanca inspire the Sevillians to rise against the French usurper and make independence their common cause; rendering the geographical distance between the two states significant only because of its ultimate irrelevance. In «Song of Triumph» (1814) William Sotheby also celebrates the impulse to act under unison of arms and cause. But writing in the year of Ferdinand VII's restoration, he significantly chooses to focus on military co-operation within Great Britain, as much as Spain. In a series of apostrophes, Sotheby's individualizes the different nations within the British force as a means of emphasising collective action:

Hail! Caledonia's strength! Ye plum'd your pride,
And rang'd your tartan robes on England's side,
Sons of the brave!
[...]
Hail, Erin's gallant race! [...] (Sotheby, 1814: 9-10)

His verse depicts different nations united through a mutual determination to reclaim the Peninsula from French expansionism.

In 1811 Scott anticipated Sotheby's strategy. In his Introduction to *The Vision* it is, significantly, the Highlands, «within whose rugged breasts | The friends of Scottish freedom

found repose», that determine the Spanish theme pursued.⁴⁵ «Decayed our old traditional lore», the Highland muses discourage the poet from writing «Of feuds obscure, and border ravaging»; the first person pronoun «our» receiving emphatic stress. The muses advise the poet to imagine, instead, the potential of «romantic lands»:

[...] where the near Sun,
Gives with unstinted boon ethereal flame,
Where the rude villager, his labour done,
In verse spontaneous chaunts some favour'd name;
Whether Olalia's charms his tribute claim,
Her eye of diamond, and her locks of jet;
Or whether, kindling at the deeds of Graeme,
He sing, to wild Morisco measure set,
Old Albion's red claymore, green Erin's bayonet!⁴⁶

The implication is that since Scotland is no longer a worn-torn country (this, notably, being an observation of national pride), her soldiers should go abroad to fight the cause of freedom. This allows Scott to take advantage of the opportunity to align the deployment of Scottish soldiers to the Peninsula with the emergence of a modern Britain, newly self-confident and ready for combat.

Regional differences could, according to Scott, be the basis of a country's strength: but throughout, the emphasis is firmly on Scottish regionalism:

[...] Much of the ancient poetry, preserved in Wales, refers less to the history of the principality to which that name is now limited, than to events which happened in the North-west of England and South-west of Scotland, where Britons for a long time made a stand against the Saxons.⁴⁷

This statement, which features in Scott's Notes, is emblematic of the way in which the poet's native history is allowed to pervade *The Vision*'s narrative; even at this point when, ostensibly, it should be concerned with the Welsh tradition. Throughout the Notes, as in the main body of the poem itself, Scott packs his poem with examples of Scottish heroism. In Note v, for example, Scott pays homage to Colonel Cameron, who «fell at the head of his native Highlanders, the 71st and 79th», inspiring among his men a dreadful spirit of determination. The poet claims that «Massena pays my countrymen a singular compliment in his account of the attack and defence of this village, in which, he says, the British lost many officers, *and Scotch*»,⁴⁸ adding typographical, and rhetorical, emphasis of his own in recognition of the furious Highlanders of this «*Scotch*» division.

Scott was proud of the Highland recruits in the British army, whose ancient warlike spirit receive explicit mention in the poem's Introduction, Conclusion, and Notes, as well as its final verses. Indeed, while *The Vision* is commonly seen to begin and close in praise of the Duke of Wellington, the Notes actually conclude in praise of Graham and his warlike ancestors, referring to Sheridan's Vote of Thanks for the Scottish General known as «the hero of Barrosa». By celebrating Highland culture and its distinctive contribution to the Peninsular War, Scott dismisses any notion of the Highlanders constituting

⁴⁵ Scott, verse IV, 5.

⁴⁶ Scott, verse IX, 9.

⁴⁷ Scott, Notes on the Introduction: Note I, 67.

⁴⁸ Scott, Notes on the Conclusion: Note v, 118.

a «terrorist organisation».⁴⁹ This is in contrast, for instance, to *Rob Roy* (1817) where the Highlanders are presumed to pose a threat to the stability of Lowland Scotland and England in 1715.⁵⁰ In 1811, Scott took advantage of Britain's military operation in Spain as an opportunity to define a new Scotland, and by extension a new Britain, amenable to local distinctions. While in his *Waverly* novels Scott would present equivocal portraits of the Highlanders —portraits that offset their heroism in the battlefield by questioning their role in civilized society— in the *Vision* his representation of the Highlanders cast a much more positive light on modern Scotland.

Scott's treatment of the Irish is, however, much more guarded —informed, most likely, by the religious insecurities Ireland continued to provoke in Scott's political thought. In *The Vision* he describes how, with majesty:

From mast and stern St George's symbol flow'd
Blent with the silver cross to Scotland dear,
Mottling the sea their landward barges row'd,
And flashed the sun on bayonet, brand, and spear.⁵¹

St Patrick's cross is notably overlooked in this description. The poet also defers his address to the Irish soldiers —apostrophised as «Rough Nature's children»— until verse lx. Scott, who was an opponent of Catholic Emancipation, predictably places his emphasis on a British Protestant force, rather than a Catholic one. The intensification of the Veto Controversy in 1811, the year in which his poem was published, may well explain why Scott delimited his portrayal of the Irish forces.⁵² In order to safeguard his argument about the power inherent in regional responses, Scott offered only a qualified commemoration of the Irish war effort, restricting his praise to a very personal eulogy of Arthur Wellesley, the Anglo-Irish commander.⁵³

IV

In his description of the English and Scots' joint arrival to fight the Spanish cause, Scott's reference to the Britons' historic rivalry is intended both as a literal and indirect means of re-imagining Anglo-Spanish hostilities:

A various host —from kindred realms they came,
Brethren in arms, but rivals in renown—

49 As Richard Holmes explains, the enlistment of Highlanders in the army «gave a legitimate scope to the martial spirit that might otherwise have been used against [the British government]». The 42nd, 79th, and 92nd division of Highlanders all wore kilts during their time in the Peninsula (Holmes, 2001: 57, 188).

50 In *Rob Roy*, the Highlanders are associated with primitive society and a savage disposition. Chapter xxx describes their «miserable dwellings», and common hatred of the English. Frank presents a terrifying image of «the natives» when he likens the Gaelic-speaking women, with «shrivelled brows, and long skinny arms», to the weird sisters in *Macbeth* (Scott, 1998: 344).

51 Scott, verse lv, 50.

52 George III was renowned for his uncompromising attitude to the Catholics. Supporters of Emancipation hoped that they would fare better with the Prince Regent, but he proved surprisingly conservative in his politics, and failed to grant any concessions when he assumed power in 1811. See «State of Public Affairs», *Universal Magazine* (February 1812), pp. 150-156.

53 For an interesting example of Irish responses to Scott's poem, see Charles Phillips's «Verses Occasioned by Walter Scott's invocation to *The Vision of Don Roderick*, ending «Strike the bold Harp, green isle, the Hero is thine own», in *The Theatrical Inquisitor, and Monthly Mirror* (April 1813), p. 176 —a poem with distinct political overtones.

For yon fair bands shall merry England claim,
And with their deeds of valour deck her crown.⁵⁴

By drawing attention to the Scottish contribution to the British campaign, *The Vision* promotes a belief in the inherent promise of the Anglo-Spanish alliance, which also united historic enemies for the realisation of a common cause.

Scott's emphasis on the links between Scotland —ancient and modern— with contemporary Spain was not, however, in itself, unique. Take, for example, Robert Semple's *Observations on a Journey through Spain and Italy to Naples* (1808), which also drew upon the history of Anglo-Scottish conflict to discuss the Peninsular campaign. In Semple's narrative, the plurality of the Spanish provinces is read against the backdrop of ancient rivalries between the English and Scots (now united by a mutual commitment to political stability). At a crucial point, he remarks that «England and Scotland were once most inveterately hostile», the temporal distance of «once» relegating national differences to a far away, almost forgotten time still, nevertheless, resonant for modern politics:

It is good we should refresh our memories from our own history. Little more than half a century ago, a few bands of northern Highlanders, many of whom were without muskets, descended from their mountains, defeated a considerable body of regular troops, took Carlisle, and advanced into the heart of England (Semple, 1808: 11, 289).

Here, the Scottish anecdote is invoked in order to persuade readers that the popular movement in Spain could be successful, however ill-equipped or disorganised the Spanish army may have been.⁵⁵ But the allusion is also riddled with ambivalence. Semple's commentary obviously refers to the Jacobite Rebellion of 1745 and the attempt by the Scottish Highlanders to reinstate the Stuart Dynasty in the person of «Bonnie Prince Charlie». In the early months of the rebellion, the Highlanders enjoyed surprising success against the superiorly equipped government forces, but once the regulars were organised into an army, the Highlanders fared miserably: Charles ultimately fled to France, the Duke of Cumberland crushed the rebellion, and the threat of Jacobitism was effectively quenched by repressive measures. These facts, conveniently overlooked by Semple's narrative, would have been common knowledge among his readers. His anecdote only makes sense, consequently, when it is read alongside his earlier concern about «mob» violence in Portugal (1808: 11, 21). This suggests that while keen to celebrate the power of native resistance and popular resolution, Semple maintained that good leadership was paramount —the kind of leadership that Charles had failed to give the Highlanders, and that the Spanish nobility seemed reluctant to provide for the armed peasants.⁵⁶ Perhaps it is not surprising, therefore, that when it came to portraying the heroes of *The Vision*, Scott should have painted romanticised Highlanders instead.

⁵⁴ Scott, verse LVIII, 51.

⁵⁵ In *A Second Journey in Spain in the Spring of 1809* (Semple, 1812), Semple continues his identification of the Highlander with the Spanish peasant. See plates 1 and 9 esp.

⁵⁶ *A History of the Campaigns of the British Forces in Spain and Portugal* 5 vols (London, 1812), I, xvii. The author interprets the Spanish revolution as rousing «the spirit of a great people, dormant for ages, and creating numerous native-armies that must for ever destroy the hope of his consolidated European empire, and gives another region of liberty to mankind!».

V

Yet, for all his national pride there was, curiously, one Scotsman whom Scott's narrative notably failed to mention: Sir John Moore.⁵⁷ According to the *Edinburgh Review*, this was «unpardonable»:

[...] It is a sin not easily to be expiated, that in a poem written substantially for the purpose of commemorating the brave who have fought or fallen in Spain and Portugal,—and written by a Scotchman,—there should be no mention of the name of MOORE!—of the only commander in chief who has fallen in this memorable contest;—of a commander, who was acknowledged as the model and pattern of a British soldier, when British soldiers stood most in need of such an example—and was, at the same time, distinguished not less for every manly virtue and generous affection, than for skill and gallantry in his profession.⁵⁸

Punctuated with exasperated dashes and forceful crescendo-like repetitions of Moore's rank as a «commander» —a «British soldier» who acted with «skill and gallantry in his profession»— the *Edinburgh Review* inscribes for Moore the eulogy Scott denied him. But despite Jeffrey's impassioned sense of outrage, his review in the *Edinburgh* only provoked in Scott a nonchalant recognition that «they are very wroth with me for omitting the merits of Sir John Moore». «I must hold myself excused for not giving praise where I was unable to see that much was due», he maintained in his correspondence to John Morritt.⁵⁹

In earlier letters, Scott had been quick to condemn Moore's actions, regarding Corunna as a national disgrace. Indeed, in late 1808, when venting his thoughts on the military campaign with George Ellis, Scott clearly had Moore in mind as he decried against the standards of contemporary leadership:

A general who is always looking over his shoulder, and more intent on saving his own army than on doing the service on which he is sent, will, I fear, hardly be found capable of forming or executing a plan which its very daring character might render successful.⁶⁰

A month later, in a letter to Southey, Scott's hypothesis that «had Wellesley been there, the battle of Corunna would have been fought and won at Somosierra», entirely dismisses Moore's achievements in Spain.⁶¹ To Scott, the General's retreat at Corunna had been an embarrassing «flight», not a strategic victory.

⁵⁷ Towards the end of the summer of 1808, Wellesley and Dalrymple returned to England to face the Board of Inquiry on Cintra, leaving Moore and Burrard in charge of the British campaign in the Peninsula. Moore was entrusted to lead the army into northern Spain (for reinforcements), but was disappointed by the lack of Spanish military assistance and shortage of funds. Pursued by a superior French force, Moore and his exhausted troops arrived at Corunna on 11 January 1809, where he arranged for his army to be evacuated. As embarkation got under way, the French began their assault. Moore organised a brave counter-attack, in the course of which he was fatally wounded. Although he was subsequently immortalised in Charles Wolfe's eulogistic poem, «The Burial of Sir John Moore after Corunna» (1816), during the war itself, Moore's reputation was much more controversial. Public opinion was torn between Moore's supporters, who saw him as a valiant hero, and his detractors, who painted the battle of Corunna as an embarrassing retreat and military failure.

⁵⁸ «Article vi», *ER*, xxxvi (August 1811), p. 390.

⁵⁹ Walter Scott to J Morritt (September 1811; in Scott, 1932-37: II, 543).

⁶⁰ Walter Scott to George Ellis (23 December 1808; in Scott, 1932-37: II, 139).

⁶¹ Walter Scott to Robert Southey (10 September 1809; in Scott, 1932-37: II, 160). N. B. Ellis's article had

The fact that Moore was a Scotsman thus worked against him in Scott's poetic scheme of absolute Scottish glory, resulting in an omission of Moore that was considered both personally and politically expedient. By 1811, the Peninsular War may have been in its third year but opinions remained problematically partisan. Following the retreat at Corunna, a very public debate divided Moore's supporters and detractors, stimulating the publication of a range of texts by those who served under Moore or could otherwise claim some indirect interest in defining his reputation.⁶² To Scott, this meant that Moore's name had become associated not only with cowardice, but an all-too public vulgarity. The connections *The Vision* makes between Scotland and Spain were considered too valuable to be jeopardised by the contention over Moore, whom Scott deemed unfit, ultimately, to join the illustrious ranks of Scottish military heroes celebrated in *The Vision*.

CODA

In October 1808 the *Edinburgh Review* caused a storm by publishing Francis Jeffrey and Henry Brougham's article on Don Cevallos's *An Exposure of the Arts and Machinations which led to the usurpation of the Crown of Spain and the means pursued by Bonaparte to carry his views into effect* (1808). It was an article that, with its prediction that «army after army will be poured through the Pyrenees, and all Spain must become a field of blood», succeeded in offending a good portion of the *Edinburgh's* more conservative readership. This included, famously, Walter Scott who, feeling «disgust beyond measure»,⁶³ promptly cancelled his subscription and made arrangements for William Gifford to edit a new rival review, *The Quarterly*.⁶⁴

In their eagerness to resurrect the spirit of Jacobinism, supposedly dormant since the turn of the century, Jeffrey and Brougham contended that in 1808:

We can once more utter the words «liberty» and «people», without starting at the echo of our own voices, or looking round the chamber for some spy or officer of the government.⁶⁵

These parallels between the Spanish uprising and earlier French Revolution were deliberately provocative. In their anti-aristocratic and anti-chivalric decision to dismiss the British romance of Spain as a mere fantasy, the reviewers went on to explain, for instance, that in Spain, it was the masses who were empowered; the «very odious, many-headed beast, the multitude», as they sarcastically put it. And here, the authors claimed, «is a grand and permanent success—a lesson to all governments—a warning to all oligarchies—a cheering example to every people».⁶⁶ Unsurprisingly, Jeffrey and Brougham's

criticised James Moore's defence of his brother. The *Quarterly Review* also took an aggressive stance. In October 1809 Scott found himself the difficult position of having to write diplomatic replies to James Moore (see Scott, 1932-37: II, 249-50, 256).

62 E. g. [An Officer], *Letters from Portugal and Spain: Written During the March of the British Troops Under Sir John Moore* (London, 1809), and [An Officer of Staff], *Operations of the British Army in Spain: Involving Broad Hints to the Commissariat, and Board of Transports: with Anecdotes Illustrative of the Spanish Character* (London, 1809); Adam Neale's *Letters from Portugal and Spain: An Account of the Operations of the Armies Under Sir Arthur Wellesley and Sir John Moore from the Landing of the troops in Mondego Bay to the Battle at Corunna* (London, 1809); and *A Narrative of the Campaign of the British Army in Spain Commanded by his Excellency Lieutenant-General Sir John Moore* (London, 1809), published by Moore's brother, and into its fourth edition before the end of 1809.

63 Walter Scott to John Murray (15 November 1808; in Scott, 1932-37: II, 126).

64 See «Article XIV», *ER*, October 1808, XIII, p. 218.

65 «Article XIV», *ER*, XIII, p. 220.

66 «Article XIV», *ER*, XIII, p. 220.

specific references to «reform in England», coupled with the use of the first person pronoun to relate «the measures of our government», were seen by many to amount to dangerous, potentially contaminating rhetoric. Scott's decision to found the *Quarterly* forcefully attests that such democratic lessons were not to be taken lightly.⁶⁷

This article has shown that three years later, when he published *The Vision of Don Roderick*, Scott remained acutely aware that the British public were far from achieving any real consensus on Peninsular politics, and that accounts of Spain and Portugal continued to be refracted by divergent political concerns and aspirations. Scott nodded toward this in his Preface, as did the poem's various reviewers. Interestingly, however, this difficulty seems to have been, for Scott, the main driving force, indeed the very *raison d'être*, for his poem. It was a sense of purpose heightened by the prolonged nature of the military campaign and public debate about Britain's involvement in Iberia, which had made it increasingly difficult to extricate Britons' interests in Spanish politics from their concern over domestic affairs. It is no coincidence, therefore, that after ignoring his supposed «protagonist» for a good part of the allegorical visions, it is only when the British troops arrive that Scott once again depicts Don Roderick:

Don Roderick turn'd him as the shout grew loud—
A varied scene the changeful vision show'd,
For, when the ocean mingled with the cloud,
A gallant navy stemm'd the billows broad.⁶⁸

These lines, announcing the arrival of the British troops are explicitly located within the poem's internal framework of visionary narration; as if to suggest that it is this vision, unlike the preceding images of Spanish history, that truly rouses the eighth-century king.

The heroic action of the poem is, consequently, most visible in Scott's portrayal of the arrival of the British troops—verses predictably chosen by *La Belle Assemblée* as the «most beautiful part of the poem».⁶⁹ It may also help explain why the poem's Spanish translator, Agustín Aicart, approached his source narrative with such licence.⁷⁰ In his excellent study of Aicart's translation, Monroe Z. Hafter (1974) offers a fascinating overview of the ways in which Aicart's *La Visión de don Rodrigo*, published in 1829, under the pen-name of «A. Tracia», compares to Scott's original. Hafter highlights, for instance, how Aicart omits Scott's celebration of the Scottish soldiers in verses xv-xvii of his Conclusion. This was justified by Aicart on the basis that «Walter Scooth [*sic*] es escocés y escribe principalmente para los ingleses. Yo soy católico y español y escribo únicamente para los españoles».⁷¹ In this explanation, the translator recognises—and resists—the fact that in writing *The Vision*, Scott was addressing a British audience, rather than a Spanish one. Interestingly, he identifies Scott's audience as principally English (rather than Scottish or British), and depicts his own identity as first and foremost Catholic, then Spanish. But for Aicart, the distinction between an audience of «ingleses» and the

⁶⁷ See Walter Scott's letter to Robert Southey (dated 4 June 1812), on «*Jacquerie*» as a growing concern during this period (Scott, 1932-37: III, 125). Both Scott and Southey were much alarmed by the symptoms of popular discontent, especially after Perceval's murder in 1812.

⁶⁸ Scott, verse LV, 49.

⁶⁹ Francis Jeffrey predicted that these verses «would be oftener quoted than any other passages». See «Article VI», *ER*, August 1811, p. 388.

⁷⁰ Of the three versions of the Don Roderick story identified in this article, only Scott's was translated into Spanish; a fact best explained by Walter Scott's later fame as a novelist, and his popular success as such both at home and abroad.

⁷¹ As qtd. by Hafter (1974: 233).

poem's «escocés» author was not very material. His overriding concern was to recover the critical moments in Scott's poem that he considered unfaithful to its Spanish characters—concerns that permitted Aicart to make judicious changes; necessary, in his own words, to preserve «la verdad, la justicia y el honor español».⁷² The time lag between the publication of Scott's poem and its Spanish counterpart had, of course, added new urgencies to Aicart's understandable desire to reclaim the poem for the Spanish nation.

It is revealing to compare Aicart's qualified response to Scott's poem with the enthusiastic reception given to it by the Portuguese exile community in London. In the same year of *The Vision*'s publication, a long review, complete with generous translated extracts of the poem, was printed in *O Investigador Portuguez em Inglaterra*, a London based exiles' journal that lauded Scott's *Vision* as «hum poema sem defeitos» (a poem without defects).⁷³ Despite the fact that *The Vision*'s only real engagement with the Portuguese was through Scott's dedication of its sales profits to «the Portuguese sufferers», the review in the *Investigador* is free from any of the reservations expressed not only by Aicart, but even British reviewers such as Francis Jeffrey, who recognised that the poem's patriotic discourse was problematic, at best. By contrast, the Portuguese reviewer took pains to explain that the objections to the poem raised by its English reviewers had been informed by nothing more than party-based hostility to the British government's military campaign in Iberia.

Deliberately opposing himself to all criticism of *The Vision*, the Portuguese reviewer snubs his English counterparts as men whose objections were not only unreasonable but unjust; in short, «dezarazoados». Whereas most British reviewers considered the poet's description of Napoleon's «rude birth» distasteful, the Portuguese reviewer actually pauses to extrapolate the importance of Scott's lines:

Valeado-se das analogias da natureza, o poeta compara justamente o espirito de Napoleão ao contagion que se levanta dos paues, e leva a morte a grande distancias, e a sua origen obscura productora de tantos dezasres, á scentelha que saltando de pequena palhoça vai encendiar huma grande cidade.⁷⁴

The reviewer then finally rescues Scott's poem from the backlash of the English press by deconstructing what he interprets as the *Eclectic Review*'s misguided notion that contemporary poetry should be pacifist; arguing, instead, that «Neste seculo de ferro, precizão-se versos de fogo [...]; cantos como os de hum Moises, de hum Homero, de hum Ossian, ou de hum Scott».⁷⁵ Ranking Scott's achievement equal to the sublime poetry of Moses, Homer and Ossian, the reviewer praises *The Vision* in terms more absolute than the poem warranted, or that Scott could ever have envisaged. While Scott clearly believed *The Vision* to be more deserving than he let on, the Portuguese community surpassed all expectation when, in December 1811, it rewarded Scott's «drum and trumpet performance» with a full fanfare of its own.

⁷² As qtd. by Hafter (1974: 228).

⁷³ See *O Investigador Portuguez em Inglaterra* (No. 6), Dec. 1811, pp. 152–162 (p. 160).

⁷⁴ *Investigador*, pp. 158–9.

⁷⁵ *Investigador*, p. 162.

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